

Book Reviews

Care & Evidence: helping to promote effective care for, and collection of best evidence from, people who have been sexually assaulted. Home Office/The NHS

This is a DVD prepared for teaching purposes by the Metropolitan Police in London and The Haven, a Sexual Assault Referral Centre, established under the auspices of King's College Hospital.

The object of this training is to increase the conviction rate of alleged rapists which is now down to about 5% and to try and ensure that reporting the incident is as little traumatic as possible to the victim.

It is important to remember that the majority of the victims are female but there are male victims and they often find it more difficult to talk.

The DVD is divided into two halves, as the name would suggest, 'Care' and 'Evidence'.

The important factor to note from the start is that the DVD is aimed at those health professionals who do not specialise in this field and come across the problem as part of their job.

The 'Care' part of the programme starts by showing some potential circumstances with examples being demonstrated. There is stress on the need for co-operation between services and how to provide immediate care with the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) such as 'The Haven' as the place to go to as soon as practical. They have the facilities to provide the totality of care that is needed.

Initially, victims are 'usually seen by non-specialist police officers and doctors. Care is handed over as soon as their aspect has been dealt with.

Four elements are emphasised and discussed. They are: Listen, Believe, Do not judge and Help.

There is a sequence of priorities given: Treatment of injuries, Collection of Evidence, Contraception. Search

for and treatment of infection including HIV, Psychosocial support – GP, counselling, etc., Confidentiality and choice of subsequent action, Safety – the best choice involves police officers.

It is important that if the point of first contact is the SARC, all aspects can be covered by them.

The collection of evidence is based on Lockard's Principle and is aimed at serving two purposes. Who was the perpetrator and was there Sexual Assault.

The police collect evidence to determine What happened?, 'when?', Where? And by whom?

It demonstrates how to collect the early samples of evidence, the mouth swab and the urine and what to do with these specimens.

An SARC or a forensic physician then completes the examination.

The DVD provides an excellent teaching module for non-forensically trained health professionals. It shows how to cope with the presenting victim in Accident and Emergency and how to care for them without losing evidence. The need for a specialist – medical and police if wanted – is the next step as demonstrated.

My only criticism was of the court scene, which was unconvincing and somewhat unrealistically flawed – for example: the judge wore no wig or gown, the courtroom looked very empty and no jury was seen.

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Drugs and Poisons in Humans. A Handbook of Practical Analysis. Osamu Suzuki, Kanako Watanabe (Eds.). Springer (2005). 660pp., ISBN: 3540222774

The preface to this book states that "The most important aim . . . is to provide the most reliable and reproducible methods for analysis of drugs and poisons; therefore the newest methods and the ones requiring skills have not been

adopted." It also states that the editors do not claim that the book covers all compounds to be analysed and that they are well aware of its limitations. It is useful if the reader bears this in mind when using this book.

The first, small, section of the book contains what are termed "Chapters of general nature" which includes body samples, alternative specimens, general information concerning detection methods, problems in analysis in cases

of emergency medicine and analysis of chemical warfare agents.

The bulk of the book contains “Chapters on specific toxins” including drugs of abuse, medicines, natural toxins, pesticides, a few metals, carbon monoxide, cyanide and what are termed “chemicals of daily necessities”, amongst others.

Each chapter includes an introduction to the compound and proposes analytical methods. Chemical formulae are included as well as some metabolic pathways. Mass spectra or chromatograms of some compounds are given; case studies for some compounds are detailed. Analytical details include obtaining reagents (manufacturers’ details included), preparation of samples and instrument conditions; there are a useful series of notes with advantages and disadvantages of the methods under the heading of “Assessment of the method” for some compounds, along with instances where suggested modifications to methods have been tried. The methods are mainly for body samples but there are also some for solid drug/poison materials as well, although there seems to be no consistency between chapters as to exactly what is included. For example, there are methods for analysis of drug materials for LSD, but none for it, or its metabolites, in body samples. There are methods for analysis of MDMA tablets and body samples but only for body samples for heroin/morphine use and none for the drug materials.

Analytical methods described vary from low-tech., e.g. TLC, to state of the art LC-MS/MS. However, as Marilyn Huestis states in her foreword, having ready access to a number of diverse analytical methods does not remove the necessity to validate each method in your own laboratory to apply them accurately. One concern is the minimal information about preliminary screening tests, such as

immunoassays, which are an essential first step for many analysts.

Although the book is subtitled “A Handbook of Practical Analysis”, it does go further than this to include some information to assist with interpretation, such as the pitfalls of post-mortem redistribution and some information on therapeutic, toxic and fatal levels, but has little pharmacokinetic data. For example, there is no information on alcohol elimination rates. However, there is insufficient information in the book for it to be considered useful enough as a significant resource for interpretation of results, but it is more than the title suggests, i.e., an analytical handbook.

Some chapters are of limited use, e.g. benzodiazepines, whereas some are more comprehensive and useful, such as that on GHB. Each chapter contains a list of references, again some of limited use, others much more useful. There are many typographical errors and the inevitable language translation inconsistencies.

As a starting point for someone new to analytical toxicology, this book will find a useful niche; experienced practitioners will find it less useful although there is something in here for everyone, provided you are aware of the many limitations.

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Anthony C. Moffat, M. David Osselton, Brian Widdop (Eds.), *Clarke's Analysis of Drugs and Poisons*, third edition, (2004) Pharmaceutical Press, London, ISBN: 0 85369 473 7

Previously known as *Clarke's Isolation and Identification of Drugs*, this completely revised and expanded third edition is both a practical manual and a standard reference work. It is intended to be the definitive source of analytical data on drugs and poisons and is aimed primarily at forensic scientists who are faced with identifying and quantifying these substances in body fluids and other products. However, such is the range and depth of the work that it will also have an appeal and value to a wider audience.

This new edition contains a large amount of fresh material and is effectively two distinct books. Volume 1 has 18 chapters on general topics that will be of particular interest to a broader readership including forensic physicians, clin-

ical toxicologists and pathologists, while the remaining 13 chapters cover specific analytical techniques that are really only of specialist appeal. The chapters are written by over 40 international experts and include sections covering the application of toxicology in areas such as drugs of abuse, alcohol and drugs in driving, postmortem toxicology, drugs in saliva, hair analysis and volatile substances. These are authoritative statements that accurately reflect the current state of the art and are all well referenced.

In the chapter on drugs and driving, the authors compare the state of knowledge in relation to alcohol and drug impaired driving. Alcohol, the most widely abused drug, is also the best understood in terms of dose-related impairment, with numerous studies documenting the adverse effects of alcohol on driving at even the lowest concentrations at which we typically measure. The techniques for measuring alcohol in blood and breath are discussed and there is a use-